

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman. I have noted that all of my suggestions are taken with great solemnity and consideration on your side of the aisle, and I very much appreciate it.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2005, AND HOUR OF MEETING ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2005

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 2 p.m. on Monday next, and further, when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 27, 2005, for morning hour debates.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

PRAISING THE AFGHANISTAN ELECTIONS

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, although the war on terror is far from over, this past weekend's successful elections in Afghanistan were a clear sign that we are on the right track in winning the war. More than 12 million people in Afghanistan stood strong in the face of the Taliban and voted in their parliamentary elections.

But we should not be surprised. Earlier this year, Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai came to Washington to ensure the American people that these elections would be a resounding success in the face of terrorists, and he was right.

Even though Taliban terrorists killed five candidates and four election workers leading up to the election and on Sunday murdered another 15 people, election turnout was still impressive. Despite the danger, the Afghani people's thirst for democracy was great. The vote was also a major milestone for Afghan women who have long been oppressed. There were 580 female candidates, or 10 percent of the total.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that the Afghanistan nation is strengthening and unifying the body of its parliament, allowing the Afghanistan citizens to operate as a collective action.

AMERICA'S GOLD STAR MOTHERS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize our Gold Star Mothers, a special group of American women who have lost either a son or daughter through service to our country.

Although these mothers have experienced a parent's greatest fear, they remain dedicated to supporting our military. By helping the men and women who serve in our Armed Forces, they are honoring their child's service in a positive way. Gold Star Mothers volunteer in our military hospitals, show compassion to our veterans, and care for the families of servicemembers. Their selflessness and generosity is an inspiration to all of us.

As the father of three sons who are currently serving in the military, I would like to express my appreciation for their support. Gold Star Mothers are making a difference in the lives of thousands of people.

On Sunday, I would like to encourage all Americans to take a moment to observe Gold Star Mothers Day in their communities.

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September 11.

□ 1700

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SODREL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GUTKNECHT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFazio) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFazio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFazio).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

REVAMP AMERICA'S FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, last week I introduced the Fostering Our Future Act of 2005, a bill to help our Nation's foster youth by strengthening dependency courts and requiring accountability. Foster care is a critical safety net for half a million abused and neglected American children.

It is, however, a system in need of drastic reform and greater support. Twenty percent of all foster kids will be forced to wait over 5 years for a safe, permanent family. Even worse, almost 20,000 older youth age out of the system without the assistance of a permanent family every year.

Frequent foster home transfers create turbulence and insecurity that heighten the emotional behavior and educational challenges faced by these youth. The doubling of the foster care population since the early 1980s compounded this problem by creating enormous caseloads and taxing the capacity of foster homes. The end result is that foster kids, through no fault of their own, are more likely to experience homelessness, unemployment, and other life course problems despite their courageous resilience.

Imagine what it is like to be 8 years old, neglected by your parents and then taken away from them, living with a family that is not your own, confused by the court proceedings that govern your future, frightened that you might be transferred to another home and alienated and from your peers who talk about mom and dad. Imagine what that feels like.

These children deserve better. They should be guaranteed physical and emotional safety. They should have continuing relationships with caregivers and loved ones. They should have an informed voice in the legal decisions made about their lives. And they should enter early adulthood prepared to live a healthy, happy, and productive life. We have a responsibility to these children to meet these goals, and anything less is unacceptable.

Practitioners and policy experts have conducted thorough analyses and advanced proposals to overhaul the foster care system. The most prominent is a comprehensive 2004 report by the bipartisan Pew Commission, and identified several areas where the Federal Government can support these kids by strengthening the Nation's foster care systems.

The Pew report found that State dependency court systems are failing to sufficiently track cases, and trained personnel, unlike State child welfare agencies, they did not receive Federal funds to do so.

Interagency collaboration and performance measurement, where they exist, are inconsistent, both within and between State systems, and tend to focus on bureaucratic needs rather than outcomes.

Finally, these systems struggle to retain qualified dependency attorneys